

Week of November 25, 2002: MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Thanksgiving Holiday Safety

Closer: (throughout the week) Many Americans will be on the road this week and MaineDOT reminds you to be a "Road Model" and drive safely.

Monday:

Facts:

- Nearly 1,700 crashes occurred on Thanksgiving weekends during the past three years. These crashes resulted in 6 fatalities and over 600 injuries.
- Many people will be taking long trips to see family and friends. If you are traveling, make sure that you and your vehicle are ready for the trip.

Tips:

Here's a pre-trip vehicle checklist:

Vehicle:

- Fluids at proper levels? (Oil, coolant, brake fluid, windshield washer)
- How are your tires? (properly inflated, adequate tread-especially considering winter storm season)
- Are brakes functioning properly?
- Any repairs that you have been delaying? Get them done-do not take chances.
- Headlights, tail lights, directional signals, and side marker lights all working? (Properly operating lights allow you to see and be seen. Also, they need regular cleaning this time of year.)
- Windshield wipers working well? (wiper blades should be periodically replaced)
- Do you have a supply of windshield washer? (It gets used up quickly this time of year)
- Have you packed so visibility is clear and luggage is secure?

Driver:

- Be caught up on your rest before traveling
- Plan your route

Passengers:

- Pack activities for kids to use in the car

Wednesday:

Tips:

The real key to crash prevention is safe driving behavior. Here are some reminders to keep you safe on the road:

- Be rested before taking the wheel.
- Driving is a full time task. Don't let distractions take your eyes or your mind from what is happening on the roadway.
- Maintain safe speeds.
- Be ready to safely react to problems on the road or the actions of other drivers.
- Make sure the driver of your vehicle is sober.
- Leave adequate space between you and the vehicle ahead.
- Make sure everyone buckles up.

- Maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you. (leave an additional following distance if roads are wet or snow covered - 4 to 5 seconds)
- Keep current on weather reports (conditions can change quickly this time of year)
- Allow extra time for holiday traffic
- Take regular rest breaks.
- Stay calm, and enjoy the ride! When driving-“Just Drive!”

Friday:

Tips:

When you are out traveling this long weekend, remember:

- Expect holiday traffic delays. (Leave yourself extra travel time - Don't let delays get the better of your emotions.) (If you leave late, expect to arrive late.)
 - Watch out for Moose and Deer
 - Check your local weather as well as predicted conditions along your route.
 - Today is a big shopping day, with hurried drivers in store parking lots.
 - Keep an eye out for traffic in all directions, both on the road and in parking areas).
 - Watch out for pedestrians (especially the young and the elderly)
 - Slow down and be courteous.
- Enjoy your trip!